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Civil War

HEAD QUARTERS, CAVALRY CORPS,
Beaufort District, So. Ca., December 29, 1864.

GENERAL ORDERS, }

No. 7. }

I. The continued and grave complaints made by citizens against this command, require that the most stringent efforts be used by all officers to prevent the slightest depredations of any character in future.

II. The requirements of General Orders, Nos. 18 and 21, from Army Head Quarters, and all General Orders from these Head Quarters relating to discipline and depredating upon the property of citizens, will be rigidly enforced.

III. No officer or soldier will be permitted to enter a dwelling under any pretence whatever, unless invited by the occupant. Division, brigade and regimental commanders will bivouac with their troops, and with assistance of their staff officers will see, by close supervision, that no rails are burned, or depredations of any character whatever committed. They will see that proper and regular issues of forage and subsistence are made, and no waste allowed. To this end they will require the most vigorous and energetic efforts on the part of Commissaries and Quartermasters for the procurement of necessary supplies. When the command is without wagons, every detail sent out to procure supplies will be under the command of a commissioned officer, who will be held strictly responsible for depredations committed by the detail.

IV. 1st. Each division commander will select a regiment under a strict officer, which shall be used as the Provost Guard of the division. This regiment will be selected for its general good conduct, and will be retained on this duty only while its conduct is exemplary. Division commanders may, at their option, detail men from other regiments for this duty who they deem specially appropriate for that purpose. 2d. When on the march the Provost Guard shall be kept in advance, and

will leave a guard at every house on the line of march under a good officer, which guard will not suffer any soldier of this or any other command, to take any species of property whatever from the premises. These guards will be relieved by the Provost Guard of the division next in rear. The guard of the rear division will remain on duty till the rear guard of the command has passed. 3d. When in camp, guards from this regiment will be stationed at every house within the lines of the division, of sufficient strength to protect the premises.

V. Each division commander will detail two or more officers to serve upon his staff, whose duty shall be to follow in rear of the command, and visit every house on the line of march, and every house from which forage or rations are procured. They will examine the vouchers given, see that they are of the proper character, and take a note of every complaint made by citizens. These officers will be required to certify in writing, every Sunday morning, that this duty has been fully complied with. A complete record of all complaints made by citizens will be kept at Division Head Quarters.

VI. 1st. The brave officers and men who for three years have fought with me in this sacred cause, facing every danger, and enduring every hardship, are not guilty of horse stealing and destroying property. Foul aspersions have been thrown upon you by the conduct of a few bad men, some of whom may belong in our ranks, but many of whom falsely claiming identity with this command, hover around your line of march, committing depredations in your name, thus throwing the odium of their bad conduct upon you. 2d Besides being my duty to protect citizens and the families of your fellow soldiers, it is also my duty to protect your honor and your fair names, and I am determined at any cost to accomplish these objects. 3d. If the base conduct of a few straggling robbers, or the vile tongue of slander has clouded your otherwise bright fame, a course of the most scrupulous and irreproachable conduct on your part can alone relieve you. I, therefore, appeal to every one of my officers and soldiers, to aid to their utmost ability in bringing all offenders to justice. 4th. Citizens must also assist in this work. If their property is trespassed upon or their horses stolen, they must follow the culprit until means are acquired to secure his arrest, either by procuring aid or by tracing him to the camp. There complaint should be

promptly made to his commanding officer. If full redress is not given, appeal should be made to the next commander, and so on until justice is obtained.

VII. 1st. By rigidly enforcing this and other orders from these Head Quarters on the subject of discipline and depredations, division commanders can render the discipline of their commands perfect. A General Court Martial is established in each division, and ample means furnished to relieve the army of disqualified and neglectful officers. Their places can be supplied by meritorious men, whom the law admits of being appointed for valor and skill. 2d. In holding division commanders strictly responsible for the conduct of their commands, the corps commanders will lend them every aid by assuming the responsibility of ordering any punishment which circumstances may demand. Division will hold brigade commanders strictly responsible. Brigade must look to regimental commanders, and they must hold captains to strict account for the conduct of their men. For every breach of discipline some one must be punished. If the officers whose duty it is to punish the offender neglects that duty, his immediate commander must take action against him. Without certain and prompt punishment for every offence or neglect, proper discipline cannot be maintained.

VIII. The spirit of this order will be carried out in all commands less than a division.

J. WHEELER,
Major General.

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